

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An information processing apparatus capable of controlling read operation of an original image by a scanner via a scanner driver, comprising:

5 determination means for determining by the scanner driver whether digital watermark information is embedded in image data read by the scanner; and

control means for controlling predetermined image processing for the read image data on the basis of a  
10 determination result by said determination means.

2. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said control means processes the read image data into image data different from the read image data when said  
15 determination means determines that the read image data substantially matches the specific image data.

3. The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising display means for displaying a warning message representing that the image data is processed to match the specific image data when the predetermined  
20 image processing is performed for the read image data,

wherein said control means discards the read and processed image data on the basis of an image processing request from a user in response to the warning message displayed on said display means.

25 4. The apparatus according to claim 3, wherein said control means creates log information from which a read

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processing status of the specific image data can be  
verified, and registers the log information in a  
nonvolatile memory on the basis of the image processing  
request from the user in response to the warning

5 message displayed on said display means.

5. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the  
predetermined image processing includes resolution  
conversion processing of converting a resolution of the  
read image data, color conversion processing of  
10 converting color tone of the read image data, and image  
conversion processing of adding arbitrary image data to  
the read image data.

6. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the  
specific image data is data of an original image whose  
15 copying operation is prohibited by law.

7. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the  
specific image data is stored and managed in advance so  
as to be updateable.

8. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the  
20 scanner can be connected via a local interface or a  
network interface.

9. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the  
digital watermark information is embedded in the  
specific image data at a predetermined cycle.

25 10. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the  
digital watermark information includes, as code

information, information about the type of specific image data, an issue country, an issue number, and a value.

11. The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the  
5 digital watermark information includes invisible or visible information.

12. The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising storage means for storing image data read by the scanner,

10 wherein said control means also processes an image stored in said storage means.

13. An image processing method for an information processing apparatus capable of controlling read operation of an original image by a scanner via a  
15 scanner driver, comprising:

a determination step of determining by the scanner driver whether digital watermark information is embedded in image data read by the scanner; and

a control step of controlling predetermined image  
20 processing for the read image data on the basis of a determination result in the determination step.

14. The method according to claim 13, wherein the control step comprises processing the read image data into image data different from the read image data when  
25 the image data is determined in the determination step to substantially match the specific image data.

15. The method according to claim 13, further comprising a display step of displaying a warning message representing that the image data is processed to match the specific image data when the predetermined  
5 image processing is performed for the image data in the control step,

wherein the control step comprises discarding the read and processed image data on the basis of an image processing request from a user in response to the  
10 warning message displayed in the display step.

16. The method according to claim 13, wherein the predetermined image processing includes resolution conversion processing of converting a resolution of the read image data, color conversion processing of  
15 converting color tone of the read image data, and image conversion processing of adding arbitrary image data to the read image data.

17. The method according to claim 13, wherein the control step comprises creating log information from  
20 which a read processing status of the specific image data can be verified, and registering the log information in a nonvolatile memory on the basis of the image processing request from the user in response to the warning message displayed in the display step.

25 18. The method according to claim 13, wherein the specific image data is data of an original image whose

copying operation is prohibited by law.

19. The method according to claim 13, wherein the specific image data is stored and managed in advance so as to be updateable.

5 20. A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing an information processing apparatus capable of controlling read operation of an original image by a scanner via a scanner driver, to execute

10 a determination step of determining by the scanner driver whether digital watermark information is embedded in image data read by the scanner, and

a control step of controlling predetermined image processing for the read image data on the basis of a determination result in the determination step.

15 21. The medium according to claim 20, wherein the control step comprises processing the read image data into image data different from the read image data when the image data is determined in the determination step to substantially match the specific image data.

20 22. The medium according to claim 20, wherein the computer-readable storage medium records a program for causing the information processing apparatus to execute the display step of displaying a warning message representing that the image data is  
25 processed to match the specific image data when the predetermined image processing is performed for the

image data in the control step, and

the control step comprises discarding the read  
and processed image data on the basis of an image  
processing request from a user in response to the  
5 warning message displayed in the display step.

23. The medium according to claim 22, wherein the  
control step comprises creating log information from  
which a read processing status of the specific image  
data can be verified, and registering the log  
10 information in a nonvolatile memory on the basis of the  
image processing request from the user with respect to  
the warning message displayed in the display step.

24. The medium according to claim 20, wherein the  
predetermined image processing includes resolution  
15 conversion processing of converting a resolution of the  
read image data, color conversion processing of  
converting color tone of the read image data, and image  
conversion processing of adding arbitrary image data to  
the read image data.

20 25. An information processing apparatus capable of  
controlling read operation of an original image by a  
scanner via a scanner driver, comprising:

information extraction means for extracting, by  
the scanner driver, digital watermark information  
25 embedded in image data read by the scanner; and  
image processing means for processing the image

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data on the basis of an extraction result from said information extraction means.

26. The apparatus according to claim 25, further comprising selection means for causing a user to select  
5 whether to process the image data by said image processing means.

27. The apparatus according to claim 26, wherein said selection means displays whether to process the image data on display means, thereby causing the user to  
10 select whether to process the image data.

28. The apparatus according to claim 25, wherein said image processing means overlays the information extracted by said information extraction means on the image data.

29. A processing method for an information processing apparatus capable of controlling read operation of an original image by a scanner via a scanner driver, comprising:  
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an information extraction step of extracting, by  
20 the scanner driver, digital watermark information embedded in image data read by the scanner; and

an image processing step of processing the image data on the basis of an extraction result in the information extraction step.

30. A computer-readable storage medium which stores a program for causing an information processing apparatus  
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